

VEDANTA ARTICLES

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GURU-SHISHYA

Guru is a name of a relationship, and not just any person. He or she is a special person whom to look up as a man possessing the knowledge which I aspire to have. Not only we look upon such a Mahatma as a Man of Knowledge, and capable of imparting that knowledge to us, but he too has accepted us as his shishya. Every relationship requires two consenting people.

GURU-SHISHYA

While there are great teachers Guru's of every field, and every one of them are a blessing, but Guru Poornima is celebrated more specifically as our respects towards our Adhyatmic Guru, the teacher who reveals to us the secrets of our Self and Ishwara. While other knowledges can be possibly acquired by some self-study and dedicated practices, the adhyatmic knowledge is an exclusive domain of our teachers. Our truth is unimaginable, and by our self-study we can only interpret what our intellect decodes. Whatever we can possibly imagine, that is not it. This is what is said in the famous statement of Kena Upanishad that the truth is different from everything known or even unknown. A Sat-Guru in our tradition reveals not just his experience, but rather gives us insight into the

GURU-SHISHYA

Vedanta Shastras, which alone are pramana. So it is Vedanta Shastras as explained to us by an enlightened teacher alone is the source of valid knowledge. Even though these teachers are obviously enlightened souls but the nature of tradition is that all of them initiate us into the Upanishadic lore rather than just say that this is my experience. When the very individuality is transcended & negated then there can be no stamp of individuality whatsoever. All sampradayas where some great individual has been their initiator, they are not Vedic tradition. Brahman alone manifests as an individual, but the very realization of Brahman implies negation of the snake-like individuality. So anyone sticking to their individuality is obviously not speaking what the Upanishads are revealing,

GURU-SHISHYA

and if at all they are saying that alone, then isn't it appropriate to give due credit to where it truly belongs. It was ages back that the Upanishads revealed that the truth is one, and it is Brahman. This itself is so awesome, that such a knowledge existed thousands of years back. We all are just recipients of that ancient knowledge, not its author. So basic courtesy demands that we all give credit to them alone.

The greatness of teachers is that they can explain the scriptures to us properly. That is why we reverentially remember our teachers like Veda Vyasa and Sri Aadi Sankaracharya. Even my teacher just took the scriptures as the basis for all his expositions & teachings. My sat-guru is that Shrotriya & Brahma-Nishtha master

GURU-SHISHYA

whom I look upon as the Brahman who has manifested for us to realize the knowledge revealed in the scriptures; not only that, but he also has accepted me as worthy of this initiation. It is then alone a Guru-Shishya Relationship is created, and it is the most precious relationship in this whole world.



ROLE OF A GURU

Guru word basically means ‘One who imparts Knowledge’. The student is thereby equipped with better & valid insight into the ways of the world & the truth of our Self. Such a student thereafter lives his or her life and gets blessed. The role of a Guru is not to bring about results, which is the domain of Karma. What most of the people want is some special Kar-

ROLE OF A GURU

ma-Phala - some special results & achievements. They are desperate for that, and whosoever assures results they will tend to follow them. Result oriented endeavors are not the real domain of a real teacher, even though our Guru's reveal to us all the aspects of Karma, its Karta, and its good or bad consequences, however the focus is more on the whole science rather than its execution & its subsequent results.

We are aware of Science & Technology. Science is the study of the secrets of a particular aspect of life. Scientists are very objective & analytical and the truth is that real scientists do not bother too much about the technology to use the facts discovered by them. In fact I have met people who consider it a distraction in their objective studies & analysis. They say that first let us just



ROLE OF A GURU

study and know the truth, then we shall think of anything else. So also is Gyana & Karma. Gyana is very detached & objective, such masters have themselves dissociated themselves from all created achievements, and focus exclusively on the uncreated truths of life. That is why Vairagya is so important a quality. First things first. keep aside all goals except to know the truth. For this a different mind-set is required, once the truth is realized, then comes the technology - which is all about the implementation of a discovery to make the lives of people better. Technocrats require a different mind-set all-together. Whoever appreciates the importance of these two things, shall know the exact role of a teacher in life. This is very rare and precious, when we get an opportunity to explore the truth of life completely



ROLE OF A GURU

objectively. Detachment implies unconditioned approach. Then alone the truth is known.

So when I hear of people praising their Guru's for some miracle then I can just feel sorry for them. Their teachers are obviously not detached from the results, and are obviously of the tech-cate-gory. Such people do not know the truth first-hand and are more bothered for using heresay information to somehow help people get some cherished results. Both such people are ignorant. Go to a teacher just to know the truth, thereafter plan what you need to plan, and then work hard to get whatever result you cherish. The validity of knowledge is the domain of a teacher, its implementation is a different story all together. So let us wake up and realize the role of a teacher in life.



MESSAGE OF BHAGWAD GITA

The message of Bhagwad Gita to the entire mankind is that life can & should be lived lovingly & holistically. Every person deserves to live life fully. Proper understanding of life assures that inspite of all challenges & occasional setbacks, grief need not be there. Grief is an indication of improper, rather wrong understanding of life. Moha alone brings Shoka. The capacity to live life in this way alone is the proof that one has understood the message of Bhagwad Gita and life in general.

MESSAGE OF BHAGWAD GITA

Bhagwad Gita is basically not a book revealing rituals or practices, but reveals the philosophy of life, the art & science of living life fully. It needs to be a Universal Handbook of Understanding & Living Life Fully. It has been addressed to a thoughtful & intelligent person, who is free to ask questions & raise doubts, if any. The first scene was that of a grief-stricken prince, and as is the consequence of such a mind, he had lost his enthusiasm to live. Physically also he had all the symptoms of a neurotic patient. Shaky legs, sweating hands, horripilation, spinning head and awry thinking. By the end of the discourse his mind was clear of not only the effects of that grief & stress but also the very cause of it. He was endowed with a new perspective and he gave out his best and finally won the historical war against all odds.



MESSAGE OF BHAGWAD GITA

This is what Gita does, it helps to invoke the best out of us, and the best thing is that you become so big that all the successes & failures they become very small. So nothing really affects such a person, and there is a continuous movement forward towards a more sublime goal of realizing oneself to be the infinite divinity itself.

It is only when our goals are small and we are therefore dependent on various worldly situations, achievements or experiences, that the world can affect us negatively and bring about despondency in the face of any negative turn of events. So Gita talks about the truth of our own identity & reality. It tells us that the manifestation of an individual from the fundamental timeless reality should never be seen as our



MESSAGE OF BHAGWAD GITA

truth, but just as a small wave in an ocean. The motivation for our day to day life therefore need not be merely worldly acquisitions or experiences, but should be something subjective. It has to be self-actualization and self-purification. One should aim for subjective enhancements rather than objective acquisitions. One point which has been highlighted very nicely is that in our day to day karma, we should have some worldly goals but never just get attached to any fruits of actions, because one is basically inspired by subjective aspirations. To the extent we can remain equanimous in all ups & downs of life, yet giving out our best, prepares the person for the Self-Knowledge.

The truth of life is not something beyond the clouds, but is manifesting in all the things &



MESSAGE OF BHAGWAD GITA

beings of the world, one just needs to focus on the life principle more yet taking care of the medium of manifestations. God is to be seen everywhere, because God is not any person, but the timeless reality of life. He can definitely manifest as a person, but is never limited to one manifestation alone. Learn to see that God, connect with him and be His instrument. That way the whole life becomes a matter of great joy comparable to interacting with your beloved. This is what the message of Bhagwad Gita is.



MAKE KRISHNA YOUR SAARATHI



The best prayer any devotee can do is to pray that just as was in the case of Arjuna, we also need to have Bhagwan Sri Krishna as the Saarathi of the chariot of our life.

Just before the Mahabharat War, when both the parties were busy in getting their armies ready, and also busy in getting more & more people

MAKE KRISHNA YOUR SAARATHI

on their sides, both Arjuna & Duryodhana went to Dwaraka to request for Lord Krishna's assistance. While Duryodhana was happy to have got the great Narayani Sena of Krishna on his side, Arjuna was more than happy to have Lord Krishna on his side as his Saarathi during the war. Saarathi in those days was extremely important person & post. He had to be reliable, completely trust-worthy, intelligent and capable of taking quick decisions, afterall the life of the master was in the hands of the Saarathi alone. The respective requests of both the cousins revealed their respective perceptions & values of life. One valued material possessions more, while the other valued right knowledge and association of the men of wisdom most. It was this singular decision of Arjuna which made all the difference in the victory of Panda-

MAKE KRISHNA YOUR SAARATHI

vas over Kauravas. Krishna had vowed not to fight the battle or even wield any weapon in his hands, but in Arjuna's opinion it was not the physical fighting capabilities which he wanted, but rather Lord's wisdom during the most critical moments of his life. If Bhagwan was not there, Kauravas would have won the war without even any fighting.

Gita resides in the heart of Bhagwan Krishna, as per his own words. Bhagwan is Gita, and Gita is Bhagwan. Gita is full of timeless & eternal wisdom of life, and what everyone needs is the right wisdom of life. To begin with just love & respect Bhagwan Sri Krishna, and then slowly & steadily study Gita and make the teachings of Gita your own vision. This is what is implied by making Lord Krishna as your own Saarathi.

WHAT IS DHARMA?

Dharma is basically a holistic Art of Living which is based on the faith of intrinsic divinity of oneself and also of others. Dharma is that art of living which emanates from love within and thus brings about well-being of all. Dharma is that way of life, in which we see everyone in the creation as connected and mutually complimentary. True dharma exudes love & respect

WHAT IS DHARMA?

for all, and making others happy becomes a matter of our own happiness.

Dharma reveals that which is right for all - at different stages of life, and also for people endowed by different motivations. So whether it is individual dharma, social dharma or cosmic dharma - it is all based on our basic philosophy of Vedanta, and slowly & steadily helps the person to lead to it. Living a Dharmic life is natural to an enlightened person, while following the tenets of Dharma helps the ignorant to tread in that right direction. The word right is relative to the goal which one aspires. The right goal obviously has to be something attaining which we shall be fulfilled and there is well-being of all too. So true righteousness has



WHAT IS DHARMA?

to lead one to adhyatma, one's own spiritual awakening. Blind acquisition of wealth or endless gratification neither leads one to peace & fulfillment nor helps others too, so such things are not obviously 'right', and dharma denigrates such thoughtless acts.

Dharma being an Art of Living, it is in the form of do's & don't's; and as it ultimately leads one to fulfillment within, it is God-centric as against living an ego-centric life. So in the name of dharma we see various karmas & upasanas which hover around God. However, merely doing some rituals is not dharma, but being aware of God and making some ritual an instrument to express one's reverence to God certainly is. Some foundation of spiritual



WHAT IS DHARMA?

knowledge is very necessary for treading the path of dharma. Not being blessed by such knowledge all rituals become mechanical and lead to ego-fulfillment.

An ego-centric life is basically insecure and unfulfilled. There shall be endless dependence on things & people, without them we are again insecure. Ego, which is to take oneself to be an individual, alone is the cause of all frictions, problems and destruction in the world. Dharma helps bring about that fundamental paradigm shift to make our life centered on that which is complete & divine. We ultimately realize that alone as our real self.





MY DHARMA

The foundation of your dharma is first & foremost the awareness that your life is a gift of & by Ishwara; and you have come in this world as HIS instrument to do HIS work. This needs to give you a very big identity. Look upon everyone too as your own brethren, as all of us too are his instruments.

Your role in this stage of life is your own intrinsic motivations, in the situation you get. Our

MY DHARMA

prakruti and situations are initially not in our hands, but are obviously someones gift. Dont bother too much about changing situations, but learn to use every situation to bring about well-being of all. This work as an instrument of God, for the well-being of all has to be done with all the knowledge, love & energy at your command. Live every moment fully & intensely, and having done your best, just humbly offer it to your beloved God. So in your very existence, there is blessedness, the beginning of work is with love, the process of work is an expression of holistic living, and at the end of it - offer it to God, thus remaining free from any ego-centric attitudes. Living in this way is your dharma



ADHYATMA & DHARMA

Adhyatma & Dharma are two different things. Roughly translated they are referred to as Spirituality & Religion. While adhyatma is all about turning inwards and knowing the truth of oneself; dharma is all about following various do's & don'ts which are supposed to help us with a divine art of living in the world outside, as per the truth of life. Seeing the intrinsic differences between these two, many people tend to say that they



ADHYATMA & DHARMA

are spiritual but not religious. Obviously they prefer a magnanimous, unfragmented & spontaneous life, free from any burden of following any rules & regulations. Adhyatma reveals that truth which is the substratum of all, it negates & transcends all divisions, and is thus definitely all-embracing; while religion is not only seen as fragmentary - as in, my religion & your religion, my god & your god etc., but in that we have to follow the diktats of some and are thus dependent on various religious leaders. If these religious teachers are wise then its fine, otherwise history books are proof that religion has caused greatest wars & violence in the world.

Adhyatma with its philosophy provides us with the logic & vision of oneness & completeness, however, this is another bitter truth that mere intellectual appreciation of this vision doesn't quiet



ADHYATMA & DHARMA

bless us with that awakening, rather a mere intellectual appreciation has its own set of problems. So the basic question arises that how can our intellectual appreciation & convictions get translated into an awakening, and doesn't just keep us at an intellectual level, which also becomes as much a burden as following a set of beliefs outside. The basic problem is all about the subtlety & purity of the mind. If we continue to have deep-rooted conditionings regarding various things, so long knowledge remains intellectual. The teachers who revealed to us both these two packages of adhyatma & dharma, were obviously well-aware of the implications of both, they were also conscious of this problem of remaining at the intellectual level. So they proposed the package of religion, not as an alternate to adhyatma, but as a facilitator to it. It is only when adhyatma & dharma are seen as two alternates that preferences manifest. All these




ADHYATMA & DHARMA

people are obviously not on the same page as our great masters of yore. The objective of religion is basically to prepare our minds, make it sattwic & sukshma. We appreciate the intrinsic limitations of any religious package, yet we follow it, just to make our minds ready. It is all about our subjective cleansing rather than some social identity.

Dharma & Adhyatma are related to each other as means & end. That way it is not a problem rather it is a facilitator. Dharma helps us to love & respect someone more dearly than what we have been loving till now. Religion helps us to change our priorities from self-centricity to being God-centric. It is this which negates all our conditionings. So let us see both in right perspective and get appropriately blessed with our magnanimous adhyatmic vision. There is no doubt that all religious practices must culminate in the subjective awakening.



VISION OF ONENESS - EKATMATA

iscussions on the vision of oneness is gaining popularity in today's fragmented world. There was this topic of 'Discovering the Thread of Unity' in this years Prerna Talk organized by Indian Cultural Foundation at Mumbai; then there was the Ekatma Yatra, an endeavor of MP Govt to bring to forefront the message of non-duality taught by Sri Adi San-

VISION OF ONENESS - EKATMATA

karacharya. MP Govt plans to build a 108 ft statue of the great Acharya at Omkareshwar, where he met his teacher. Then there was this talk at Davos, in which the PM presented his views on 'Creating a Shared Future in Fragmented World'. All the three talks, which were not connected to each other, but were manifestation of the common concern of importance of such a unifying vision by various wise people of the country & the world.

Differences at various levels of our personality are very natural & obvious. However, there is also a thread of unity inspite of the superficial differences. This fact is of most profound importance & consequence. Those who are not aware of this underlying unifying thread, have no other option except to attach to some superficial aspect from

VISION OF ONENESS - EKATMATA

where they not only become very limited but also isolated & fragmented from everyone around. The consequence of seeing the thread of unity and on the other hand seeing differences galore everywhere are very profound. For one who sees the thread of unity of all inspite of superficial differences, sees all as their own. Everyone is that which they too fundamentally are, and when you see yourself anywhere, there is love for everyone, effortlessly. Moreover, they become so big, so as to embrace the entire cosmos. With such a vision there cannot be any war or animosity. While if you see the other as different, then not only the seer is small, limited & isolated, but everyone around are 'not-me or mine'. It is this perception which is the cause of all conflicts. Therefore such apparently philosophical tenets are not a matter of someones



VISION OF ONENESS - EKATMATA

luxury and thought, but are so consequential, that such a knowledge needs to be taught by all countries & societies of the world.

If the unifying thread is a matter of fact, then obviously it is a very fundamental reality of all. For realizing it we need to go very deep within ourselves. We will need to ignore the superficial aspects of ourselves, and keep going so deep, till we discover a dimension from whose point of view there are no differences. It is all about Self-Discovery. No wonder the entire culture of our ancient country is basically adhyatmic. Discovery of this unifying thread was the objective of all teachings. Its realization was called Moksha - redemption. It alone is the foundation of a healthy human being and the world.



EGO IS THE TEN-HEADED RAVANA

Every year on Dasshera we make an effigy of Ravana, look upon him as an embodiment of adharma and burn him to ashes and thereafter celebrate. In every religion & culture, there is a continuous reinforcement of the idea that evil has to be consciously effaced & rooted out, then alone we can establish a just & healthy society which will care for the well-being of all. Other



EGO IS THE TEN-HEADED RAVANA

hindu traditions of Holi or Navratras etc also re-inforce similar values & motivations.

However, there is also a spiritual dimension to these stories & traditions. Ravana basically stands for our ego. Ego is our manifest identity, and by its very aspirations we can easily infer that it is a seeker, and is thus not complete in itself. It is a fragile & limited entity. Every individual has dreams, aspirations and self-dignity. They create a world which fulfills its agenda, and whatever we don't like is kept away at a distance. Ego with its likes & dislikes divides the world into two parts, one he runs to, and the other he tries to run away, and thus is ever on the run. Some people are very ambitious & desperate and in this process they become so insensitive to others that they stampede their way to their goals. They are



EGO IS THE TEN-HEADED RAVANA

responsible for all violence & evil. While every society tries to rein these over-ambitious ones, but we all know that ultimately it is the person himself who can change themselves. Ego is indeed like an egg, whose shell if broken from outside then its life literally ends, and as though gets more pains & problems, but if by proper knowledge it goes through a process of incubation and hatches from inside, then the breaking of its shell manifests a new life. So also the ego of every person cannot & should not be tried to be set right from outside. All others can do is to love & respect it and then its best manifests. Ultimately it has to be handled by ourselves alone.

Transcending of our ego is the most tricky operation in this world. It is like a ten-headed demon like Ravana. You cut one head, and it raises



EGO IS THE TEN-HEADED RAVANA

another and assures its continuity. That is what Ramji realized, till he was made aware by some knowledgeable person to strike at its very root, and not bother about just stopping its various manifestations. At one time there is an unfulfilled ego, then we work hard and then we have a fulfilled ego. So the ego continues to exist. We need to realize that ego-fulfillment is not ending of the ego. Even when its negative manifestations have ended, yet the truth is that the ego continues to exist. At one point in time I am ignorant, then we study and then we say that I am now knowledgeable person. This is what it means by saying that this ten-headed monster keeps raising different heads.

Root of the ego is the taking up of our limited & manifested identity as our real identity. Once



EGO IS THE TEN-HEADED RAVANA

we take our limited identity as real, no one in the world can ever efface it. However, if we explore & analyse deeply and realize that I am not the seen but the consciousness which sees all manifestations, that we can ever hope to transcend the ego. That is what Lord Ram tells us, and that is what he did to finally kill this demon. Jai Sri Ram.



MEDITATION TIPS

When you sit for meditation then the goal is not to be unaware of everything, but rather to see the objects as objects and the subject as subject. Not seeing these two as they are is the root cause of all problems. So change your priorities. Once you clearly see an object as an object, you will effortlessly detach from it and then will turn your attention on the subject -



MEDITATION TIPS

the you. See the fact that you as the seer stands apart from all that is known. The roles you have or had been playing and the worldly identities you have been donning, is not the real you, they are taken up only after identifying with different roles, people or faculties. As someone standing apart from all that is known you are therefore none of all what you have been taking yourself to be. Just appreciate the implication of this statement. Drop all identities, and just be, and then most importantly appreciate the real truth of yourself as the subject. By being unaware of everything you will miss even your own amazing truth. Realize the truth of your self by giving up all your samsari identities. You are the actor not the roles. it is this direct realization of your own truth which is the goal of real meditation.

TRANSCENDENCE

Transcending something implies the realization of the independent existence of that thing. Like a cause transcends the effect. The effect cannot be without the cause, but the cause can exist independent of the effect. Like a wave cannot be without the water, but water can exist even if it has not manifested in the form of a wave. Then we say that water transcends waves.

TRANSCENDENCE

Similarly, we need to discover that I, the self, transcends the mind. Our minds, with all its thoughts, dreams & emotions can only exist as long as I am there. Afterall it is my mind, and my thoughts, so I have to be obviously be around. I am the one who is thinking & dreaming. We have the freedom to either think about this or that, or even keep aside all thoughts and maybe prepare for sleep or meditation. So obviously thoughts cannot exist without me. They are dependent on me. But we also need to realize that even when there are no thoughts, yet we continue to exist. This reveals the independent existence of self, apart from the coming & going thoughts. This is what transcendence means.



TRANSCENDENCE

Realization of our transcendence implies freedom. This is the realization of the fundamental truth of the effect, without which it cannot be, yet that truth continues to exist in all its glory even when the effect is not there.

Realize your transcendence with respect to your body and also the mind, and thereafter live like a master and a free bird. The body and our subsequent life is only possible when I am around blessing the body, yet also see the fact that when in sleep you have kept your body in secure & comfortable place and have taken a flight in other realms of consciousness, then also you continue to exist, independently of the body. So also with reference to our minds and all other faculties & experiences.



LESSONS FROM DEATH

Death of a loved one leaves a big vacuum and shock. It is not easy to be blessed with a good relationship, who share joys and all the responsibilities. Such people are indeed irreplaceable. This is what causes grief. The way out is not to merely see one's absence of conveniences, but the facts of life. Come & go, we all have to, and we need to be ready for this. Death raises many questions and on enquiry helps us to get fundamental lessons.

LESSONS FROM DEATH

What is Death?

Obviously it is leaving a body and all its associated world, never to come back again. There is this sthoola sharira or gross body, and we also have a sukshma sharira or subtle body. Whenever a sukshma sharira comes in a sthoola sharira, there is what we call - a birth; and when it leaves, then it is death.

What happens to the sukshma sharira after departing from here?

Our Sukshma Sharira has our mind, intellect and all such subtle components. It goes around where ever the mind gravitates. Our mind is the driver, here or hereafter. Once it leaves one sthoola sharira, then it soon forgets all its relationships here, and starts a new chapter in its next nest. The people in

LESSONS FROM DEATH

its earlier life, bid it a loving goodbye, and have to carry on their lives more enlightened about the truths of life. After one life every Jiva has to carry on in its cycle of birth & death, by taking up newer bodies.

How long this jiva goes on in this cycle of birth & death?

As long we have a shopping list, we carry on the shopping, so also as long as the karmas for more experiences exist so long the cycle carries on endlessly. Obviously the Jiva is seeking some fulfillment, and that is got only by discovering its true nature which is infinite Sat-Chit-Ananda. This is what Self-Knowledge is all about. Atma-Gyana (Knowing oneself as the infinite Brahman) alone brings to an end this endless cycle.

LESSONS FROM DEATH

What is the experience after death?

Every individuality is a manifestation. We manifest from an unmanifest truth and later have to obviously go back into that alone. So going back or death, is more of a returning home. The fear of death is just ignorance of this fact. Home is where peace is. It is like going back into a realm which is without any limitations or problems. It is infinite peace.



TWO BIRDS ON THE TREE

24undaka Upanishad gives an interesting analogy of Two Birds sitting on One Tree, where one bird is sitting contented, while the other one is continuously gobbling tasty fruits. Angira Rishi sees the world also in the same way. This world is like that tree, and indeed there are just two kinds of birds seen on this tree-like world - the Jiva and the Ishwara.

The World is very often compared with a tree in various scriptures, because it all manifests

TWO BIRDS ON THE TREE

from a single stem & roots and then has so many different branches and manifestations - leaves, buds, flowers, fruits, it provides shelter for so many, it provides food and protects us from all extremities of weather etc. It is an ideal example of how one becomes many things, and the entire many continuously keep on manifesting from one. However, in spite of its manifested multiplicity & uniqueness of everything, everything is basically connected, because they are all part of one tree alone, with one common root and also the common main stem supporting & nourishing everything. The tree also has another interesting comparison, that the roots which literally support & nourish the entire manifestation are not visible with our existing faculties, nevertheless, its existence is beyond all doubts. The visible part keeps



TWO BIRDS ON THE TREE

changing continuously and drastically in every season, while the invisible part is relatively constant and unchanging. Finally, the entire tree, howsoever much is useful & beautiful, it can be cut. All these aspects become points of our deeper contemplation & reflection.

Superficially it may appear that there are so many individuals living on this tree, but on closer observation, we see that there are just two alone. Every classification has a certain basis. Here that criterion is contentment. There may be billions of individuals and still billions more other species living on this one tree, yet when we apply this criterion, then all the individuals the world over they can be clubbed under the category of seekers. Whichever country we go, whichever society we see, everyone is



TWO BIRDS ON THE TREE

desperately looking out for some experiences from their world, and interestingly this goes on forever - lifelong. Seeking, seeking, and seeking. Here and then hereafter. Whether some are educated or uneducated, rich or poor, high or low, all are trying to extricate some experiences from the world outside. All the happiness & sorrow are connected to this aspect alone. We look back in our history books - this alone is the common theme of all chapters. All wars, all politics, aim to create some ideal scenario, which is supposedly most compatible with getting good experiences for everyone. So indeed we are all generically one kind. Seekers, gobblers. While we all seek, yet in the heart of hearts - we all aim for the elusive contentment.

The other bird, which though not perceptible,

TWO BIRDS ON THE TREE

yet its existence is easily inferred. We can never insist to see everything by our sense organs alone to prove existence of something. So the other bird is seen with the pramana of inference. There can never be an effect without a cause, no crops without a farmer, so products without an industry, no fever without a bacteria or virus, so also there can be no creation without a creator. It is common sense. Obviously, the creator of this amazingly beautiful creation has to be omniscient & omnipotent. One who has so artistically created the entire creation so beautifully has a mind which is full of love & contentment. Let's call him Ishwara or God, or whatever name we may like, but he or she definitely is an embodiment of knowledge, power, love & contentment. That's the definition of God in all systems & traditions.



TWO BIRDS ON THE TREE

If the tree is there, then this second bird too is definitely there. Mere belief in the existence of such a bird brings about a profound change in our values, goals & life. Afterall we are all trying to attain that state alone. So our journey begins by seeing the existence of this second bird. Don't just see the every-hungry gobblers in the world, but rather see the signature or rather the presence of this second bird - contented, omniscient, omnipotent, compassionate. If we are conscious of the presence of such a bird, then obviously we shall think about it, befriend it, and aim for it. Such people remain positive, inspired and are real devotees. Such people alone, with the blessings of God, shall one day become that too, and thus fulfill their lives.



CHATURMASYA

The four months of Chaturmasya start from Guru Poornima. During this time all the sanyasi's stay put at one place and share their wisdom with their devotees and disciples. They pursue their sadhana's too and at times merely by their presence they assure that the people at large continue to believe in the transcendent & immanent truth as their very self. Some teach with words while others by their mere presence and silence.

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Bharatvarsha being a predominantly agrarian country and that also predominantly dependent on monsoon for water supplies, the people at large complete their sowing etc and then just wait for the crop to grow with the blessings of rains. They cannot move around also, so the people at large too are available for understanding and exploring the truth of life. Appropriate traditions too encourage these satsangs & sadhanas. Thus not only the Mahatmas but also the people at large all devote their time to satsang.

Just few days before the Poornima, there is the Dev-Shayani Ekadashi. The scriptures tell us that the devatas take a break and rest. Bhagwan Vishnu, who basically manages the whole creation, goes into Yoga-Nidra - his way to take

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a break, and so too his entire team of devatas. From the month of Sravana, which starts a day after Guru Poornima, the devotees start special & dedicated worship of Bhagwan Shiva. In fact this goes on for four months - directly or indirectly. Ganesh Parva, Sraadh fortnight and later the Navratras - all pertain to some member of Lord Shiva's so called family. In this whole story there is an interesting message being communicated, which is regarding the role of Pravritti and Nivritti.

Bhagwan Adi Sankaracharya in his Bhashya on Bhagwad Gita says that the Vedic Dharma is two fold, Pravritti and Nivritti. These are broadly translated as Action and Detachment. Action is how best I express outside and detachment is the capacity to detach, and turn

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within for introspection and meditation. Both these are as important as waking up and living dynamically and then going to sleep. However, soever important any work is, we know how important is sleep in order to live properly. Out of 24 hours, our sleep should be average one third of the time. Interestingly out of the twelve months of the year, the chaturmasya is one third its time - four months. So the message is that do work very nicely, enthusiastically and also holistically, however, in order to assure that you continue to remain intelligently & creatively productive, it is extremely important that we take a break from our life of aspiring for profits & pleasures and get a wider perspective of our own lives. Everyone needs to be aware of various facts like Who am I? From where have we come? What is the

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world? What do we seek, and where exactly is that happiness which we seek eternally? This is what *nivritti* is all about, and this is what Bhagwan Shankar represents.

So take a resolve to devote at least a third of your annual time to *adhyatma*. Study some Vedantic scriptures, do some *tapasya* and live a thoughtful & exploratory life.

